


## Citizen Views of State Government: Survey Findings from Illinois, 2007

*Presentation by:*  
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November 5, 2007

*Presentation to*  
**LLCC's Academy of Lifelong Learning  
and  
State and Local Government class**



## Citizen Views of State Government: Survey Findings from Illinois, 2007

*Survey conducted by*  
**Survey Research Office  
of the  
Center for State Policy and Leadership  
University of Illinois at Springfield**



## Adapted from Presentation for Forum on State Government and Citizen Participation

*Sponsored by:*  
Center for State Policy and Leadership  
College of Public Affairs & Administration  
Public Radio WUIS 91.9 FM

**University of Illinois at Springfield  
June 20, 2007**



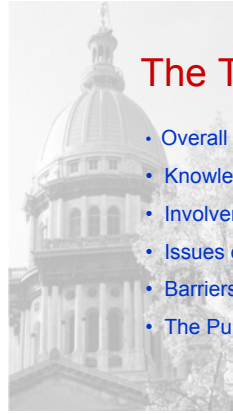
## General Information about the Survey

- May 17 – June 15, 2007
- 465 respondents interviewed
- Avg length of interviews: about 25 minutes
- Sampling error is less than +/- 5%
- Comments on representativeness

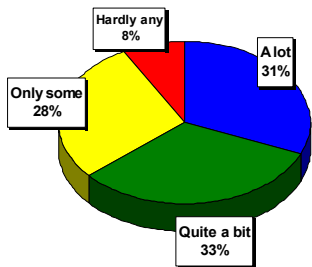
## The Topics ...

- Overall Attitudes about State Government
- Knowledge of State Government
- Involvement Profile
- Issues of Concern and Involvement
- Barriers to Involvement
- The Public's Report Card

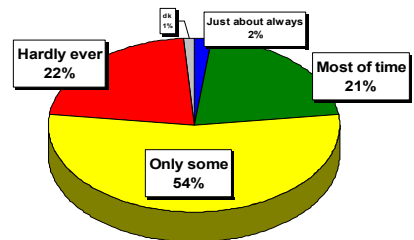
## Overall Attitudes about Illinois State Government



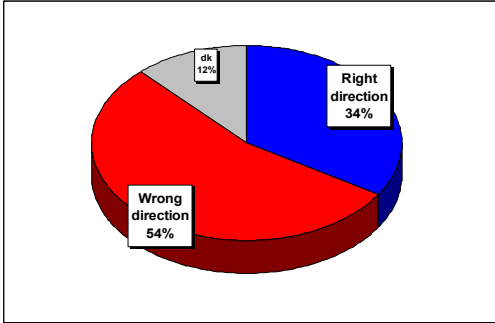
How much impact does IL state govt have on day-to-day life of you and household?



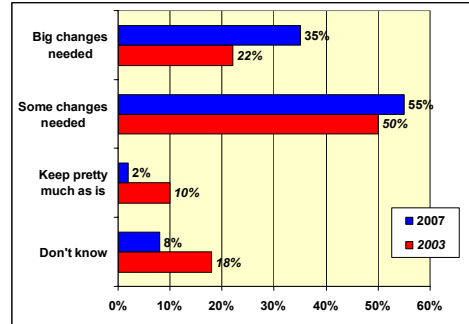
How much of the time can trust IL state government to do what is right?



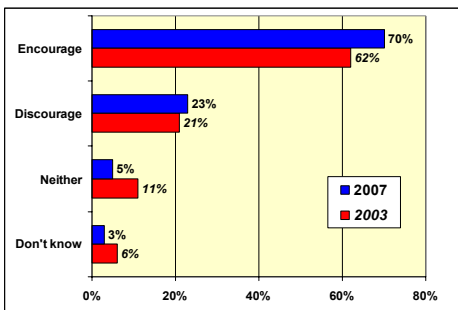
Currently, are things in IL generally going in right direction or wrong direction?



In terms of how we govern and practice politics, how much change do we need?



Is son/daughter in 20s, would encourage or discourage pursuing career in state govt?



View of citizen role – split-half question

Version 1:

The details of politics are business of professional politicians and parties. The primary role for avg citizen should be to vote.

Every citizen should actively participate in politics by staying informed, voting, and getting involved in some way.

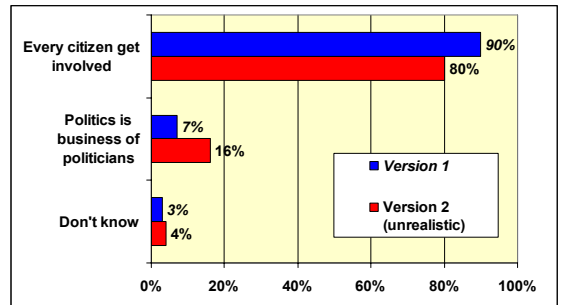
## View of citizen role – split-half question

Version 2:

Every citizen should actively participate by staying informed, voting, and getting involved in some way.

**It is unrealistic to expect this.** The primary role for avg citizen should be to vote. The details of politics are business of professional politicians and parties.

## View of citizen role – split-half question

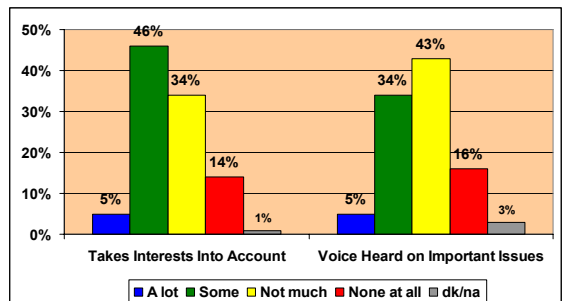


## Evaluations of “passive” and potentially “active” citizen impact ...

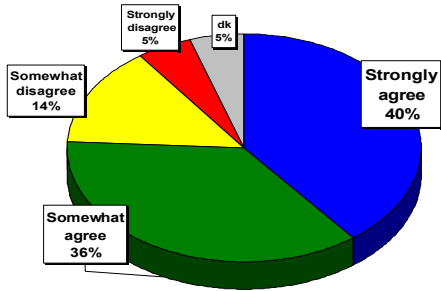
How much does IL state government *take the interests of people like you into account* when making decisions?

How much do you feel *your voice can be heard* in state government on issues really important to you?

## Evaluations of “passive” and potentially “active” citizen impact ...

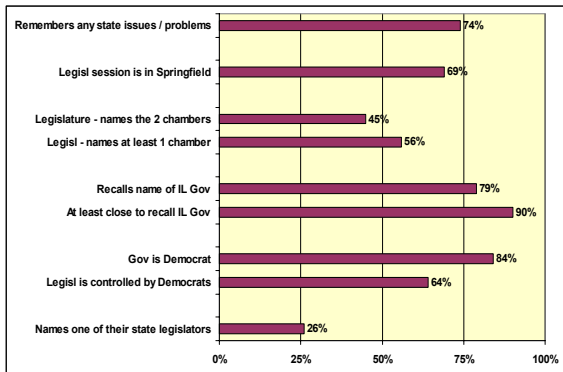


Agree/disagree: Candidates that could represent you don't run because of the amount of money they would need to raise to have a chance to win

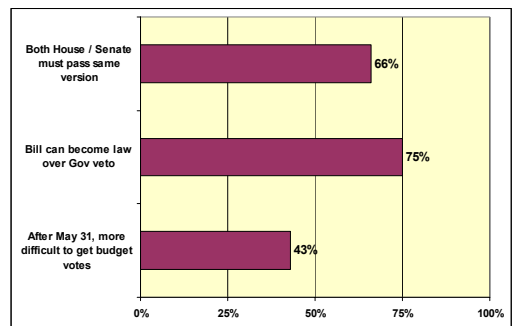


## Knowledge of Illinois State Government

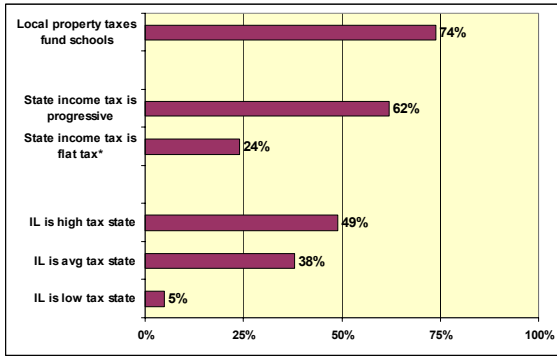
### Issues, Structure, Personnel, Party Control



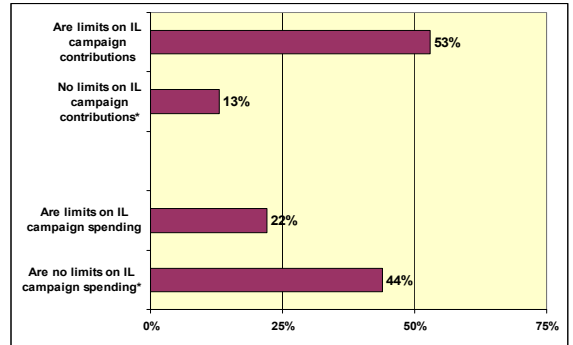
### Legislative process



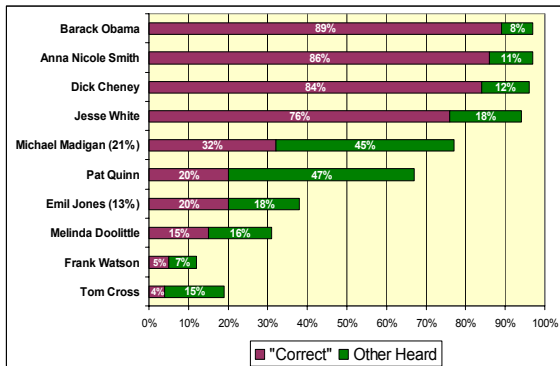
## Taxes



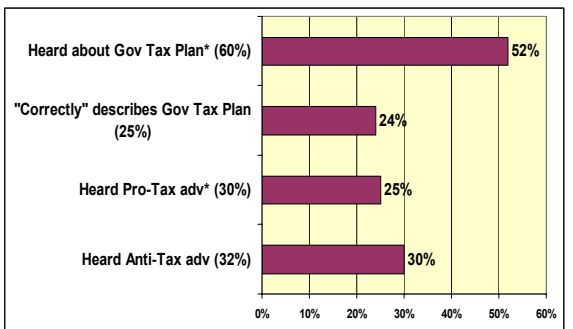
## Elections: campaign contributions and expenditures

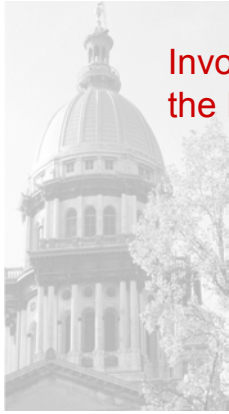


## People in the news



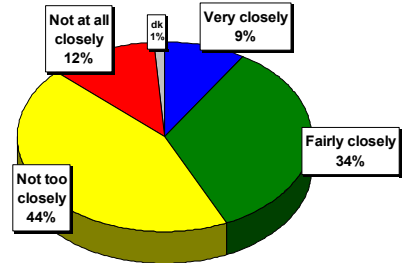
## Governor's tax plan



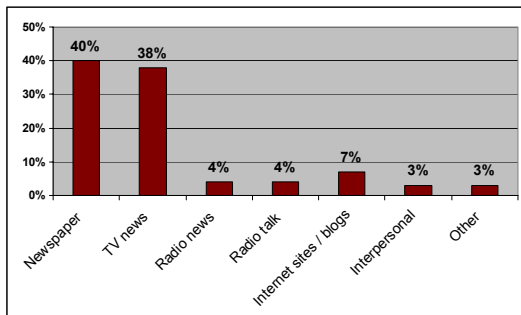


## Involvement Profile of the Illinois Public

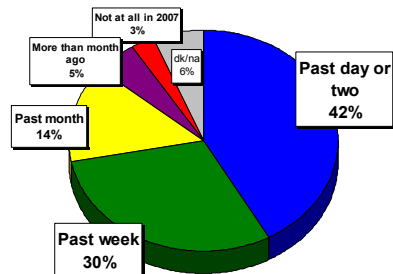
How much follow what's been going on in state govt and politics this year?



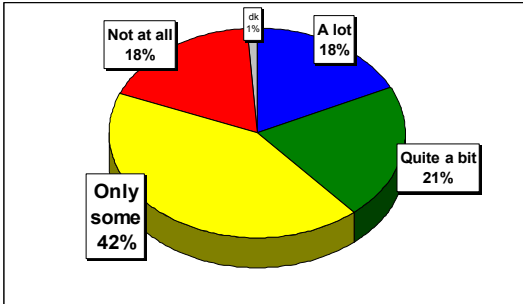
Where get most of your news and info about what's going on in state govt and politics?



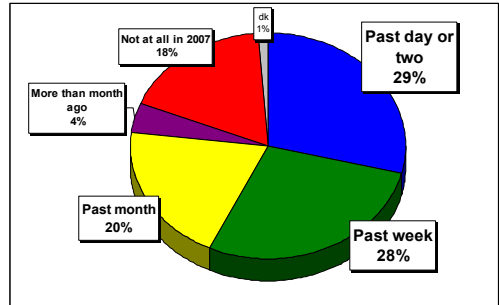
When was last time read/heard a news story or news item about what's going on in state govt and politics?



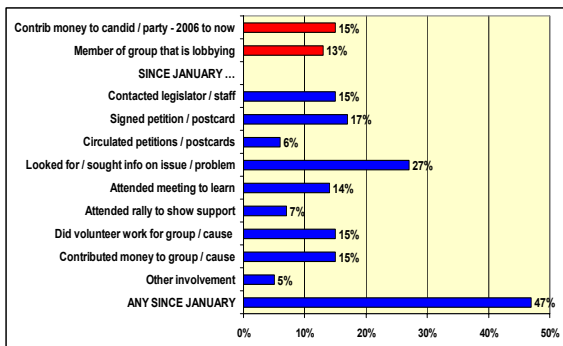
Since January, how often have you talked with others about what's going on in state govt and politics?



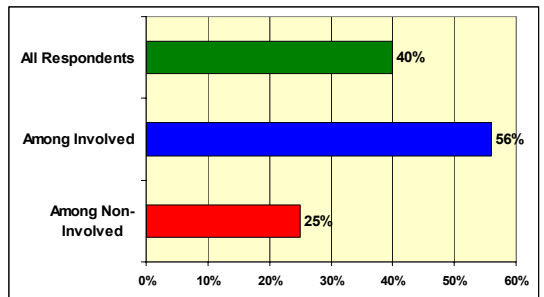
When was most recent you talked with others about state govt and politics?



### Involvement activities ...



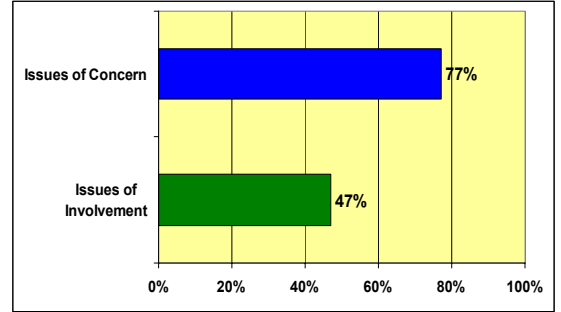
Percent who said they were asked to get involved ...



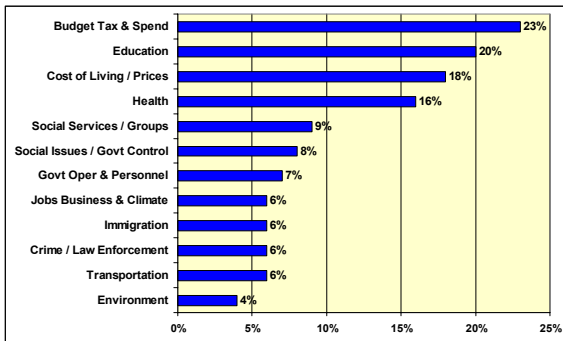


## Issues of Concern and Involvement

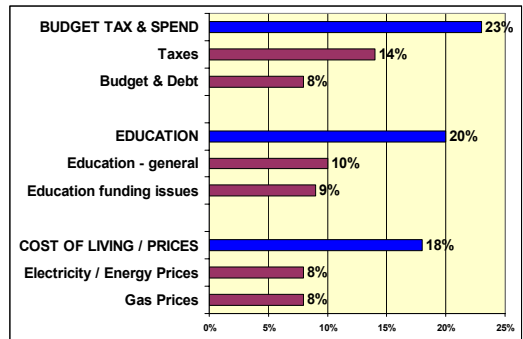
## Issues of Concern and Issues of Involvement



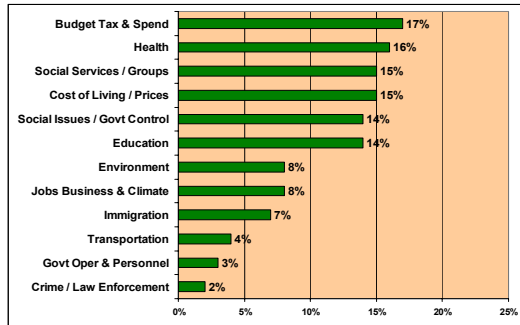
## Issues of Concern (% of all respondents)



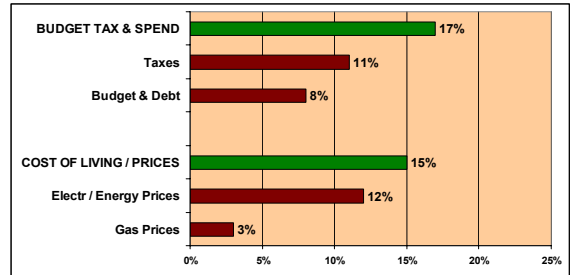
## Issues of Concern – further breakdowns



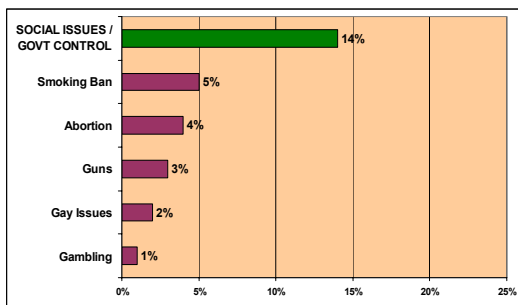
## Issues of Involvement (based on the 47% who are involved)



## Issues of Involvement – further breakdowns (based on 47% who are involved)

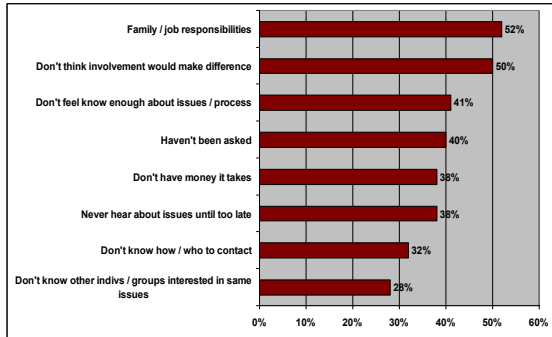


## Issues of Involvement – further breakdowns (based on 47% who are involved)

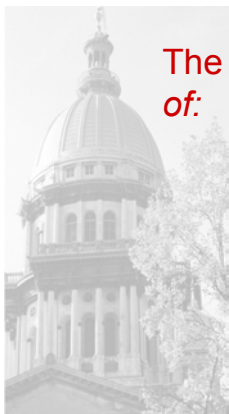
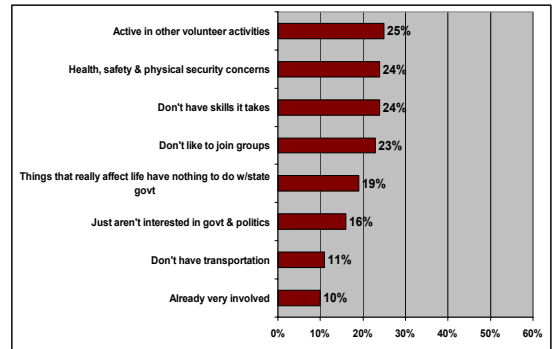


## Barriers to Greater Involvement

Eight barriers were important to more than one-quarter of the respondents ...



The remaining eight barriers ...



The Public's Report Card of:

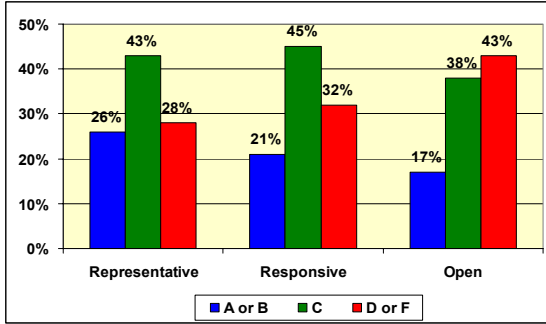
- State Government
- Governor
- State Legislature
- Media
- and the Public

Grade state government on:

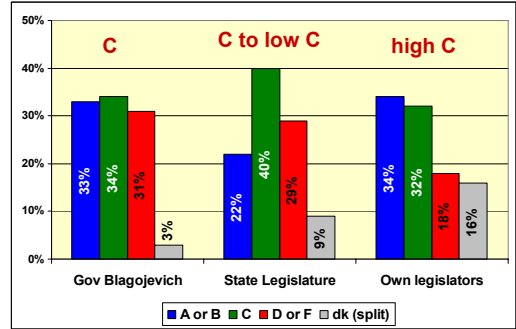
- Being representative of the diversity of people in the state (**representativeness**)
- Being responsive to the needs of the state and its residents (**responsiveness**)
- Being open in its processes and decision-making (**open – for accountability**)

### Grade on these characteristics:

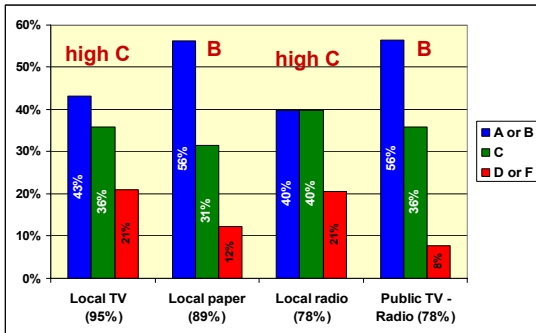
GRADE = C C to low C C minus



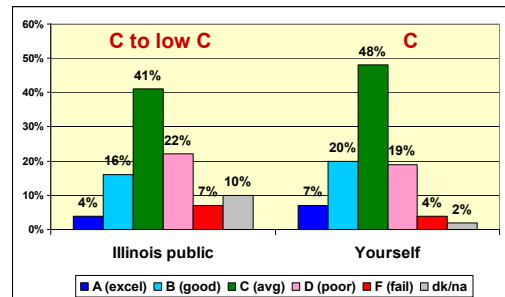
### Grade performance of: Governor, Legislature, and Own Legislators



### For coverage of state govt & politics, grade selected media (for those who graded)



### For fulfilling responsibilities of citizens, grade Illinois public and yourself





## Citizens and Government: The Potential



## Citizens: The Potential

**Citizen Role:** About 85 percent believe that the role of the citizen extends beyond voting. It includes following what is going on in government and becoming involved.

**Following what goes on:** 43 percent report following what is going on in state govt either "very" or "fairly" closely. 56% report either "not too closely" or "not at all."

**Involved:** About 47 percent report being involved in activities and issues relating to state government during this Session.

**Report Card:** Overall, respondents give the Illinois public and themselves a grade of "C" for fulfilling the responsibilities of citizenship.



## Government: The Potential

**Citizen impact beliefs:** Nearly half of the public believes that their interests are taken into account "not much" or "not at all" when state government makes decisions. *Almost 60% believe their voice is heard "not much" or "not at all" on issues really important to them.*

**Barriers to citizen involvement:** The belief that involvement would make no difference is the second most important barrier to greater involvement.

**Report Card:** Overall, respondents give Illinois state government: a "C" for being representative, a "low C" for being responsive, and a "C minus" for being open.



## Government: The Future

**70 percent would encourage a son or daughter in their 20s to pursue a career in state government, if they were interested**



## Citizen Views of State Government: Survey Findings from Illinois

*Results can be found on website:*

<http://cspl.uis.edu/surveyresearchoffice/>

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